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	Page
<i>Acreage Answers/</i>	
<i>Acreage Living Combine</i>	2
Sickle Bar Mower Safety	2
County Conservation Boards	3
Recycled Water	3
Iowa One Call	4
Annual White Grub Control	4
Safe from the Storm?	5

*Acreage Living is published bi-monthly. Please share it with your acreage neighbors. Call your local ISU Extension Office to be placed on the mailing list or contact an ISU Extension staff member listed below to suggest topics for future articles.*

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**Understanding Planning and Zoning: *Part I.***

*By Terry Finnerty, ISU Extension Field Specialist  
 Commercial Horticulture*

Planning and zoning issues are a part of our heritage: Native Americans encroached on Native Americans; Europeans encroached upon Native Americans; farmers and ranchers encroached on each other; and urbanites are encroaching on farmers. For better or worse, this is part of our changing society. Fortunately, how these issues are resolved has also changed. Laws, comprehensive plans, and zoning ordinances developed by law makers and local planning commissions have replaced weapons, soldiers, and lawmen for making land-use decisions.

Our federal and state constitutions guarantee the right to own property, and form the basis for land use decisions. However, we also operate under the real property system of English common law which treats property ownership as a “complex set of relationships and issues” that determine exactly what people can do with their property.

For example, perhaps you moved to the country to escape the environment of the city, only to discover the annoying odors and slower traffic that are part of the Iowa’s nonindustrial, noncommercial, rural environment. Now you want restrictions on agricultural activity in your area. Maybe you are the farmer or rural enterprise threatened by the proposed changes in zoning laws that your new neighbor is requesting. These are among the “complex set of relationships and issues” that determine exactly what people can do with our property, and that planning commissions must consider when making land use decisions.

How planning commissions operate, and the decisions they make will be explained in the next issue of “Acreage Living.”

***For more information:***

*Iowa State University Land Use Series: Rights in Property and Land-use Regulation: Tradition and Tensions in a Changing World,” PM 1868c.*

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## **Acreage Answers & Acreage Living Combine**

*By Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension FS/Ag Engineering and Linda Nelson, ISU Extension Dallas County CEED*

For several years, ISU Extension has been publishing two newsletters for acreage owners and rural residents. Acreage Answers and Acreage Living included similar information and were used by people with similar needs. In order to provide you, the reader, with a single stop for acreage information, we have combined these two newsletters.

The five-page newsletter will be published bimonthly with an expanded group of authors. County ISU Extension offices will have the option of adding a sixth page with local information and events. The Acreage Living web site will continue with links to back issues of both parent newsletters and increasing links to other information of interest to acreage dwellers.

We hope you enjoy this expanded resource. Our goal is to provide you with the most convenient access to timely and useful information. If you have any suggestions, please contact any of the editors listed on the cover page.

## **Sickle Bar Mower Safety**

*By Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension FS/Ag Engineering*

Sickle bar mowers offer fast and efficient cutting of tall vegetation. However, by design, these mowers present some unique safety hazards. Walk-behind mowers generally have a mounted engine for power. Tractor mounted mowers are almost always powered by a PTO (power takeoff) shaft carrying power from the tractor to the mower. Keep the tractor's master shield and the machine's PTO shield in place and in good operating condition. The PTO shaft shield should spin freely when the machine is not operating.

Older mowers may have unguarded power takeoff shafts with little or no shielding of other rotating or moving parts. Lessen your chances of becoming caught by exposed shafts by making sure you don't step next to a rotating shaft to get on or off the tractor. Better yet, guard it!

Cutter bar accidents usually involve severe lacerations or amputations, particularly to the fingers and toes. These accidents happen when the cutter bar plugs up in the field or during maintenance or servicing. To safely unplug the cutter bar, follow these steps: stop and disengage the PTO, raise the cutter bar and back up a few feet. Shut off the tractor and shift into park or set the brakes, then pull hay away from the cutter bar with gloved hands. Check the cutter bar for broken guards or knife sections, start the engine and engage the PTO at low speed, lower the cutter bar, ease mower into standing hay and resume operation. If a knife section has to be replaced, handle the blade bar only from the rear side. If you can remove the sickle bar by yourself, do so. Numerous injuries have occurred when two people did not adequately coordinate their movements.

The process for safely unplugging a walk-behind mower is similar. Disengage the mower, back up, and turn off the engine before carefully removing the plugged vegetation. Wear leather gloves and always handle the cutter bar from the back side.

Sickle bar cutters also pose a serious threat to hidden people, pets and wildlife. Make certain all people are clear of the area to be mowed and restrain pets so they cannot enter the area during mowing.

As with any tractor operation, NEVER carry any extra riders. If your tractor is equipped with a roll-over protective structure (ROPS), be certain to wear your seat belt. If your tractor does not have ROPS, consider using a different tractor or check with your local equipment dealer about a ROPS kit for your tractor.

## County Conservation Boards

by Steve Lekwa, Story County Conservation Director

All Iowa counties have conservation boards (CCB's). Section 350 of the Iowa Code provides for a broad range of services conservation boards can provide, but most activities fall into three areas: outdoor recreation, natural resource management, and education.



CCB's manage more than 1,600 public areas totaling nearly 160,000 acres. 343 of those areas offer camping, and 387 have drinking water on site. Many offer trails for hiking, biking, and even equestrian use. 313 areas have lake access for fishing and boating, and another 628 offer river and stream access. 835 areas support public hunting. CCB's maintain 143 historic sites, and operate 49 nature centers.

Most CCB's offer naturalist led programs for schools and the public throughout the year. Many assist private landowners in improving wildlife habitat. Many care for high quality nature preserves including 410 remnant prairie areas. Other activities include maintenance of county roadside vegetation,

(continued on page 4, column 1)

## Recycled Water Reduces Water Demands from Garden

by Mary Ann deVries, ISU Polk County Extension Horticulturist

Following a record-wet period, it's hard to think about dry times in the garden. And, yet it's possible that by August we'll be in the middle of another drought and back to thinking about how to conserve water.

Here's some good rainy-day advice:



☁ Collecting and using rainwater is easy when barrels are placed under downspouts. In fact, garden supply companies offer easy-to-use collecting barrels in the range of 50-75 gallons. These can be connected together and

fitted with an overflow hose to divert water from the house when barrels are full. Be sure to use secure covers for safety.

☁ Harvesting water from the house can also extend water resources on the farm. Put a garden watering can in the kitchen to use when emptying day-old water from a tea kettle, pet bowl, drinking glasses, or even unfinished bottles of water. You'll be surprised at how quickly this adds up.

☁ Allow water left after boiling vegetables or pasta to cool and then pour it in the garden. Also, a bucket placed in the corner of your shower stall will gather unused water.

During dry times, these activities can reduce pressure on your domestic well while helping to keep your landscape plants alive.

For more information on using gray water, check out this website: <http://interests.caes.uga.edu/drought/articles/gwlands.htm>

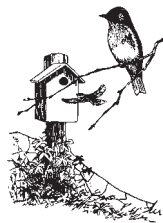


(County Conservation Boards continued)

operation of golf courses, winter sports areas, and swimming beaches.

All county conservation areas are listed in the *Outdoor Adventure Guide* with location and facility information, and a detailed road map for each county. The guide is available for \$4 from local county conservation offices.

For more information, visit the web site of the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards, <http://www.ecity.net/iaccb>



## Remember to “call before you dig” by Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Field Specialist/Ag Engineering

As you go about your summer home and land improvement projects, remember to “call before you dig.” Iowa law requires that underground utilities be located before any excavation deeper than 15 inches. But don’t worry about the details, one toll-free phone call from you is all it takes. Call Iowa One Call at 1-800-292-8989 and all utility companies will be notified for you.



## Annual White Grub Control

By Donald Lewis , ISU Extension Entomology

The white grubs that routinely damage lawns and turfgrass in Iowa are the annual white grubs. These grubs take just one year to complete each life cycle of egg - larva - pupa - adult. The adult beetles of our annual white grubs are called masked chafers. They are slightly smaller than Junebugs and tan or straw brown in color. As the name implies, they have a black stripe across the eyes and face. The masked chafers fly and lay eggs for most of the month of July.

The eggs hatch in two to three weeks meaning early to mid-August is the earliest the white grub larvae will be in the soil to begin feeding on grass roots. The damage symptoms that grass plants express because of the root feeding going on in the soil usually do not appear until late August, September, or October. Early symptoms include wilting and tan discoloration. Later symptoms can vary from small discolored patches to large, irregular dead areas. It normally takes at least ten annual white grubs per square foot to cause damage to healthy, vigorous (i.e, watered) turfgrass; fewer if grass is non-irrigated and under stress.

It is possible to check turfgrass for white grub damage before it becomes severe and noticeable. First, check your records or memory for the location of damage in previous years. Then consider areas where masked chafers are most frequently seen such as along sidewalks, driveways, and streets and at the outside edge of the light thrown by a street light or yard light. Beginning in mid August, look for grubs in the soil in these areas by slicing a square from the turf with a knife or spade and pulling it up. Grub-infested turf will pull up easily and the white, C-shaped larvae will be between the plant crown and the soil.

Several insecticides are available for white grub control. All must be carefully applied according to label directions and thoroughly watered in. Liquid insecticide sprays for white grubs must be watered in immediately before the spray can dry on the grass. Within 30 minutes, less if it a hot, dry day, water the sprayed area with at least 1/2 inch of irrigation. It may help if sprays can be applied to dampened turf (either wet with dew or lightly sprinkled before spraying). Granule insecticides must also be watered in to be effective against grubs, but the demand for immediate irrigation is lessened.

The insecticides labeled for white grubs in turfgrass include — for homeowners: diazinon, trichlorfon (Dylox and Proxol) Sevin and Oftanol; for commercial applicators: homeowner products plus Turcam, Triumph, Mocap and Crusade. There are several restrictions with each product, so read and follow label directions very carefully.



## Safe from the Storm?

by Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Field Specialist/Ag Engineering

Recent deadly tornadoes have renewed our awareness of the devastating power of high winds. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, and the National Weather Service offer this advice for tornado safety.

Before the storm:

- \* Have a tornado plan so everyone knows where to go and what to do
- \* Educate family members on the meanings of tornado watches and warnings
- \* Assemble a tornado emergency kit with a radio, batteries, flashlight, and first aid supplies

When a tornado watch is issued:

- \* Monitor radio or television broadcasts for weather conditions
- \* Watch weather conditions for warning signs like sudden wind changes, flying debris, or tornado sounds
- \* Listen for weather alert sirens if your community has them

When a tornado WARNING is issued or a tornado approaches:

- \* If you are inside, move immediately to a basement, cellar, or lowest level of the building
- \* If there is no basement, move to a small interior room like a closet or bathroom
- \* Stay away from windows

- \* If possible, get under a sturdy piece of furniture like a work bench or heavy table
- \* If you are outside, seek shelter inside, or lie down in a low or protected area
- \* If you are in a car or mobile home, get out and seek shelter in a building or low, protected area.

A few tornado myths are worth mention.

Myth: I can drive away from a tornado to safety.

Fact: Tornadoes often change direction and travel rapidly. You are safer to get out of your car and seek shelter in a basement, building, or protected area.

Myth: I should open house windows to equalize pressure as a tornado passes.

Fact: Strong winds and flying debris cause most structural damage to buildings, not unequal pressure. You are safer to stay away from windows and seek shelter immediately.

Myth: The safest location in the home or basement is the southwest corner.

Fact: The side of the home facing the approaching tornado is the most dangerous. Always seek interior rooms with no windows and get under heavy furniture or stairs, if possible.

For more information on tornado and storm safety, visit these web sites:

<http://www.redcross.org/news/ds/tornadoes/tornado/index.asp>

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/tornadoes/>

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/torn.htm>

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